DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 947 CG 032 545

AUTHOR	Williamson, Ronald D.; Broughton, Elizabeth; Hobson, Suzanne
TITLE	Shaping the Future: Collaborative Opportunities for School Administrators and School Counselors.
PUB DATE	2003-08-07
NOTE	15p.; Paper presented that the Annual Conference of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, (57th, Sedona, AZ, August 5-8, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrators; Career Development; Confidentiality; *Conflict; Discipline; *Educational Cooperation; Ethics; High Schools; Legal Responsibility; Middle Schools; *Role Perception; *School Counselors; Teacher Certification

ABSTRACT

This study stems from and builds upon an earlier project that involved aspiring school counselors and school leaders in a cross-discipline project to learn about the differing roles, legal, philosophical and ethical expectations for each group, and approaches to collaboration. During this earlier project, a series of seminars was held to engage these two groups in working collaboratively to identify problems of practice issues they expected to face as they began their new career. The current study was designed to investigate the degree of similarity and difference in the perspectives of middle and high school counselors and school leaders in one Midwestern state with regard to the major points of conflict identified in the study. This study also sought to identify strategies employed by school leaders and school counselors to minimize points of conflict and maximize collaboration. The study found significant differences between school counselors and school administrators on several of the educational issues, including collaboration and conflict, confidentiality, discipline, career development, and teacher certification for school counselors. (Contains 18 references and 5 tables.) (GCP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

CG CGTR 0087

Shaping the Future: Collaborative Opportunities for School Administrators and School Counselors

ED 479 947

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Williamson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Ronald D. Williamson, Ed.D., Associate Professor
e-mail: ron.williamson@emich.edu

Elizabeth Broughton, Ed.D., Associate Professor
e-mail: elizabeth.broughton@emich.edu

Suzanne Hobson, Ed.D., Associate Professor
e-mail: Suzanne.hobson@emich.edu

Department of Leadership and Counseling
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
(734) 487-7120

Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the
National Council of Professors of Educational Administration,
Sedona, AZ – August 7, 2003

CG032545

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

An increasingly complex and challenging environment confronts school personnel. Demands for greater accountability, the increase in incidents of violence and intolerance, and the growing diversity among students place additional demands on school resources. As the demands on our schools are increasing, schools are operating in a fiscal environment that places funding for education in competition with other services such as health care, senior programs, state and national security, and deteriorating infrastructure.

Concurrent with these increasing demands and decreasing resources, public education is also being confronted by greater public scrutiny and accountability requirements. Addressing ways in which schools might better meet student needs in these challenging times, a variety of groups during the past decade examined schools and recommended reforms (Boyer, 1995; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Cawelti, 1994; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1996; Sizer, 1996). Although the recommendations varied, one consistent theme was the necessity for school personnel to work more closely with one another as well as with parents and other community members.

As such, school personnel are increasingly expected to work in a collaborative environment, and there is recognition that such collaboration is critical to effectively serve students (Darling-Hammond, 1997). To support such collaboration, it is essential that school administrators and school counselors understand and appreciate their differing roles and responsibilities and that they develop an appreciation for their respective contributions to the success of students.

Being among the most visible of school employees, school administrators and school counselors are often the first persons to which parents and community groups turn when they want improved services for students (Coy, 1999; Murray, 1995). This is particularly true when addressing the needs of

students who face an incredible array of concerns driven by peer pressure, changing family structure, increased violence and graphic media.

Although both groups share a common interest in serving students, their preparation and philosophical orientation often lead to differing approaches and strategies for addressing student concerns (Kaplan, 1995; Shofffner & Williamson, 2000). These differences have become more pronounced as each profession has evolved in its understanding of student needs and its articulation of how the profession can best meet student needs. In the past decade, both school leaders and school counselors have articulated the need for dramatic changes in their roles. Toward this end, professional organizations for both educational leadership and school counseling have examined and refined standards for their respective professions (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; American School Counselor Association, 2003).

At a time when it is essential that all school employees work more collaboratively, the combination of the changing of standards, the changing preparation programs, and the differing philosophical approaches may result in misunderstanding and tension or even in conflict and ineffective use of time and energy for both groups (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000; Vaught, 1995). Despite differences, however, a collaborative approach can lead to open communication and assure effective programs and services for students (Breen & Quaglia, 1991; Cole, 1991; Huey, 1987; Vaught, 1995). Indeed, the new standards for each profession (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; American School Counselor Association, 2003) articulate the importance of working closely with other school personnel for the benefit of students.

There is ample evidence that collaboration between school administrators and school counselors results in more effective programs and services, services that positively influence the academic, personal and social growth of students (Cole, 1991; Huey, 1987; Wagner, 1998). Developing a better understanding of each other's role and building a greater commitment to collaborative endeavors

creates a work environment that offers positive opportunities for service to students.

Background of this Study

This study stems from and builds upon an earlier project that involved aspiring school counselors and school leaders in a cross-discipline project to learn about the differing roles, legal, philosophical and ethical expectations for each group, and approaches to collaboration. During this earlier project, a series of seminars were held to engage these two groups in working collaboratively to identify problems of practice issues they expected to face as they began their new career. The groups also designed strategies to address several cases (developed by the researchers) that incorporated legal and ethical dilemmas faced by both groups (Williamson & Shoffner, 2002).

One of the most important discoveries from this project was that startlingly different perspectives exist about ways to resolve many of the day-to-day issues faced by school leaders and school counselors. Among the starkest differences were opinions about the role of the school counselor in student discipline, and the limits that client confidentiality place on interaction between counselors and administrators (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

The current study was designed to investigate the degree of similarity and difference in the perspectives of middle and high school counselors and school leaders in one midwestern state with regard to the major points of conflict identified in the prior study (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). In addition to examining points of similarity and/or difference, this study is part of a wider research project that will also identify strategies employed by school leaders and school counselors to minimize points of conflict and maximize collaboration.

Methodology

Survey Development

Based on previous research by Shoffner and Williamson (2000), the survey was developed to include 24 items divided into three areas of interest: (1) pre-service training; (2) perceived role; and (3) school-related issues. The survey asked respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with 24 statements, using a 5-point Likert scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, N = neutral, A = agree, and SA = strongly agree. In addition to these 24 content items, information about the respondents was also collected. Specifically, respondents were asked to identify their current position, sex, age group, educational degree, credentials, years of experience in K-12 education, and the type of school (rural, suburban, urban) in which they currently worked.

Both content and face validity were established for the survey prior to pilot testing. The survey instrument was then piloted, first with school counseling graduate students and then with students enrolled in a school leadership class. All respondents in the pilot test were asked to provide feedback regarding the survey items and to offer other comments or observations. Based on this feedback, modifications to the survey were made and the survey items were finalized.

Data Collection

The survey was mailed to school counselors and school administrators in one midwestern state who were randomly selected from the mailing list for a professional association and from the state directory of school administrators. A total of 518 surveys were mailed to members of a state school counseling association and 594 were mailed to middle and high school principals. Two hundred ninety (290) surveys were returned by school counselors, 255 of which were useable for a 56% return rate, with the useable sample of 49%. Principals returned 342 surveys, 320 of which were useable. This represented a 58% return

rate, with 56% of this sample usable. The composite return rate of useable surveys was 56% for the combined sample with a total sample size of 575.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Characteristics of respondents (current position, gender, age group, etc.) were summarized using descriptive statistics and compared using inferential statistics to check for statistically significant differences across the two groups. Item responses to the survey were also analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical measures used to analyze the data included means, frequencies, and chi-square. The Chi-square analysis was used in lieu of a t-test when testing for significant differences across the professions represented in the sample. This analysis was selected because the data was not continuous and did not meet other assumptions associated with the t-test (e.g., homogeneity of variance).

Results

This study found significant differences between school counselors and school administrators on several of the educational issues. Prior to examining those differences the characteristics of the sample will be described in greater detail.

Gender of Respondents. The sample of 575 respondents consisted of 255 school counselors and 320 school principals. Of these respondents, 274 identified themselves as male and 301 identified themselves as female. Although the entire sample was almost evenly divided with regard to sex, there were stark sex differences evident within each profession. Specifically, only 20% (n=52) of the school counselor respondents were male whereas 69% (n = 222) of the school principals were male. Table 1 summarizes this data.

Table 1

Gender of Respondents Across Professions

	School Counselors	School Principals	Total
Male	52	222	274
Female	203	98	301
Total	255	320	575

Age Level of Respondents. Table 2 summarizes the age level of the respondents.

Table 2

Age Level Across Professions

Age	School Counselors	School Principals	Total
24-39	65	56	121
40 +	190	260	450
No Response		4	4
Total	255	320	575

Educational Level. Within the sample as a whole, 557 reported that they had a master's degree and 32 reported that they earned a doctorate. As illustrated in Table 3, only slight differences across professions were evident in this sample.

Table 3

Educational Level across Professions

	School Counselors	School Principals
Master's Degree	241	316
Doctoral Degree	11	21

Type of School. Of the 575 respondents to this survey, 269 described their current position as being within a rural school, 235 reported being employed in a suburban school, and 68 indicated working in an urban school Table 4 summarizes this data and disaggregates it across professions represented in the sample.

Table 4

Respondent Work Settings

Setting	School Counselors (n = 255)	School Principals (n = 320)
Rural	103	166
Suburban	113	122
Urban	36	32
No Response	3	0

The Issues

This study investigated the views of school counselors and secondary school principals on a number of issues that were earlier identified as among the most

contentious for the two groups (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Data were gathered about respondents' pre-service training, about their role and about educational issues. This paper reports on differences that emerged between the two groups regarding their role and on educational issues.

Several significant differences emerged between the two groups. They included differences around the larger issues of confidentiality, the responsibility for student discipline, and career development programs for students. Table 5 provides detail regarding the differences.

Collaboration and Conflict. Several items in the survey inquired about collaboration and/or conflict in the educational setting. Significant differences emerged between school counselors and school administrators on whether or not priorities between the two groups often conflicted.

Other studies showed that conflicts naturally emerged between the two roles as personnel performed their duties (Kaplan, 1995; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Such conflict, however, need not become debilitating. What is needed is a clear understanding of the differing roles and responsibilities (Williamson & Shoffner, 2002) and a mechanism for conversation and collaboration centered on high quality services to students.

Another item on the survey (3) asked about whether school administrators and school counselors worked collaboratively with each other. Responses were quite positive about collaboration. These differences offer an opportunity to examine more closely the working relationship between school counselors and school administrators so that we might understand the facilitators and barriers to collaboration.

Confidentiality. One might expect differences to emerge between school counselors and school administrators on the issue of confidentiality. Analysis of the differences revealed that a large portion of each group believed that there were times when confidentiality should be broken. What remains unclear are

Table 5
Difference Among Groups on Educational Issues

Item	Group Means		Chi	
	Coun	Admin	Square	Sig.
1. Priorities for school administrators and school counselors often conflict with each other	3.51	2.57	101.968	0.000
2. I work collaboratively with teachers	4.63	4.55	12.837	0.012
3. My school administrators and school counselors work collaboratively with each other	4.27	4.52	18.987	0.001
4. My school involves teachers, administrators, and school counselors in curriculum decisions	3.67	4.55	98.774	0.000
5. I believe there are situations in which confidentiality should be broken	4.22	3.97	25.397	0.000
6. School counselors should deliver discipline to students	1.41	1.96	97.289	0.000
7. School counselors should be involved in discipline	2.27	2.98	55.928	0.000
8. Principals/Assistant Principals are the only ones who should be involved in student discipline	2.95	2.37	36.367	0.000
9. I support implementing K-12 career development programs for students	4.55	4.47	14.613	0.012
10. I work with faculty and others on issues related to career development for students	4.25	4.30	18.336	0.003
11. Career development should be delivered by school counselors in classrooms	3.86	3.65	28.116	0.000
12. School counselors should be certified as teachers	4.27	3.83	75.444	0.000

the circumstances under which breaking confidentiality is appropriate. Interestingly, the group mean for school counselors was higher than that of school administrators.

Discipline. A perennially contentious issue for both groups is the role of school counselors in student discipline. Of the three items (6, 7, 8) related to discipline there is a clear statistically significant difference on the items. For both groups there is a clear preference that school counselors do not deliver discipline. However, both groups also revealed interest in school counselors being involved in discipline.

This is an intriguing issue, one worthy of further investigation. What is the appropriate role of school counselors in student discipline? How might school counselors and school administrators work collaboratively to address issues of student discipline and management? It will be important in subsequent research to explore this volatile issue in order to reach a deeper and more complete understanding of the differing views on this issue.

Career Development. Another educational issue investigated in this study was beliefs about career development programs for students. Items 9, 10, and 11 included in Table 6 report differences between the two groups.

Both groups reported high levels of support for K-12 career development programs for students. They also reported that they worked with faculty on issues of student career development. Support for school counselors delivering career development in the classroom was less strong.

Of interest is the fact that both groups support K-12 career development programs. What is needed is further investigation of how each group defines career development and how they see such programs being designed and delivered.

Teacher Certification for School Counselors. A significant difference emerged between the two groups on whether school counselors should be certified as teachers. The group mean for school counselors was higher than the

group mean for school administrators indicating higher levels of support for teacher certification.

Until recently school counselors in n this state were required to be certified as teachers. Therefore, the responses given in this study may reflect their credentialing requirements rather than preferences for newly prepared school counselors. Because of the recent changes in state licensing requirements it is an issue worthy of further study.

Implications

Each of these issues raises important implications for the preparation of both school administrators and school counselors. School personnel are increasingly expected to work in a collaborative environment. Such collaboration is critical to effectively meet student needs. It is important, therefore, that school administrators and school counselors understand and appreciate their differing roles and responsibilities, and develop an appreciation for the contributions that both make to the success of students. Identifying strategies to build bridges between the roles, built around mutual respect, is an important role for preparation programs and can only result in improved services for students.

References

American School Counselor Association. (2003). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

Boyer, E. (1995). *The basic school.* Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Breen, D. T., & Quaglia, R. (1991). Raising student aspirations: The need to share a vision. *The School Counselor, 38*, 221-228.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989). *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century.* Washington, DC: Author.

Cawelti, G. (1994). *High school restructuring: A national study.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Cole, C. G. (1991). Counselors and administrators: A comparison of roles. *NASSP Bulletin, 75*(534)., 5-13.

Council of Chief State School Officers (1996). *Interstate school leaders licensure consortium: Standards for school leaders.* Washington, DC: Author.

Coy, D. (1999). The role and training of the school counselor: Background and purpose. *NASSP Bulletin, 83*(603), 2-9.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Huey, W. C. (1987). The principal-counselor partnership: A winning combination. *NASSP Bulletin, 71*(499), 14-18.

Kaplan, L. S. (1995). Principals versus counselors: Resolving tensions from different practice models. *The School Counselor, 42*(4), 261-267.

Murray, B. A. (1995). Principals: Proponents of high school guidance programs, *NASSP Bulletin, 79*(570), 64-68.

National Association of Secondary School Principals (1996). *Breaking ranks: Changing an American institution.* Reston, VA: Author.

Shoffner, M., & Williamson, R. (2000). Engaging pre-service school counselors and principals in dialogue and collaboration. *Counselor Education and Supervision 40*, 128-140.

Sizer, T. (1996). *Horace's hope.* New York: Houghton-Mifflin.

Vaught, C. C. (1995). A letter from a middle school counselor to her principal. *NASSP Bulletin*, 79, 20-23.

Wagner, T. (1998). Change as collaborative inquiry. *Phi Delta Kappan, 79*(7), 512-517.

Williamson, R. & Shoffner, M. (2002). Building bridges: Increased trust and understanding between school administrators and school counselors. *AASA Professor, 25*(3), 29-35.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Shaping the Future: Collaborative Opportunities for School Administrators and School Counselors	
Author(s): Ronald Williamson, Elizabeth Broyhter, Suzanne Hubron	
Corporate Source: Paper Presented at NCPEA Conference	Publication Date: F/03

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: Ronald D Williamson	Printed Name/Position/Title: Ronald Williamson Associate Professor	
Organization/Address: Eastern Michigan University Dept of Leadership & Counseling 304 Porter Ypsilanti MI 48197	Telephone: 734-487-7120 x268	FAX: 734-487-4040
	E-Mail Address:	Date: 8/22/03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org